



Airman 1st Class Jason Neal

Airman 1st Class Rebecca Burgess administers the smallpox vaccine to a fellow airman on Pope Air Force Base, N.C. Service members in Europe have begun receiving the vaccine as well.

Smallpox vaccine comes to Europe

By Sgt. 1st Class Betty Thompson
Europe Regional Medical Command

U.S. medical officials in Europe plan to begin vaccinating service members against smallpox.

The first to be vaccinated will be “certain emergency response and medical personnel as well as other designated personnel that constitute critical mission capabilities,” said Cynthia Vaughan, Europe Regional Medical Command public affairs officer.

“We certainly are convinced that there is a threat and that we do need to protect our people,” said Lt. Col. (Dr.) Loren Erickson, ERMCM medical consultant. “We feel there is an obligation [to] protect our people but certainly also paramount is that we don’t hurt anybody... So what we’re going to do up front is carefully screen people, exempting from vaccination those with certain medical conditions which could increase their risk for adverse reactions to the vaccine.”

The smallpox vaccine being used to immunize personnel – made from a virus called vaccinia – does not cause the smallpox disease; rather, it protects recipients by helping to build immunity. Vaccinia provides the most effective defense against smallpox but, as with any vaccine, some recipients will have reactions.

Erickson said that first-time recipients of the vaccine should expect three pricks on the upper arm using a two-pronged needle that contains a droplet of the vaccine. People who have previously received the smallpox vaccine will get 15 pricks to ensure that the virus is fully inoculated into the skin (which could still have residual immunity). The arm pricks will cause a sore spot, and blood droplets may form.

Normal reactions include soreness, inflammation of

Smallpox resources online
www.cdc.gov/smallpox
www.vaccines.army.mil

the area, and a red spot similar to a blister formed at the site of the vaccinations that will crust over and itch, Erickson said. “It would also not be uncommon to experience some body aches and a low-grade fever.”

“If you immunize a million adults with the smallpox vaccine, and this is their first time receiving the vaccine, about 40 would develop a widespread rash or skin reaction,” Erickson said. “Out of that million, maybe four would develop a swelling of the brain, which is called encephalitis. Out of that million people, it is possible that one or two can die.”

To prevent these reactions from occurring, Erickson said the screening process would help to identify and exempt individuals at greatest risk. Those to be exempted from receiving the vaccine include the following:

- People with chronic skin conditions such as eczema or very bad acne, where the normal integrity of the skin has been disrupted
- People with compromised immune systems (such as someone infected with HIV or someone receiving chemotherapy treatments for cancer)
- Pregnant women

“We’re going to be very deliberate ... We’re going to screen carefully,” Erickson added. “This is something that our leaders made clear: We’re certainly going to protect our people but not at the expense of having a large number of reactions.”

Web site promotes ‘Hooah 4 Health’

By Col. Christine H. Inouye
U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

As Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki has stated, “Army readiness is inextricably linked to the well-being of our people.”

Now, to enhance that troop readiness, an Army-sponsored comprehensive health and fitness resource is only a mouse click away at www.hooah4health.com.

“Hooah 4 Health,” or H4H, is a self-help, Web-based, interactive health promotion and wellness program that helps integrate the Army’s well-being mission.

The site embraces the holistic concept of body, mind, spirit and environment, and is supported by a team of Army sponsors including the Office of the Surgeon General, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, Army Reserve and Army National Guard.

Visitors can access dozens of military and other government healthcare sites to find vast amounts of health maintenance and prevention educational material. Interactive health calculation tools have been developed to derive Army Physical Fitness Test scores, find target heart rates and compute body mass index.

An online food and fitness diary is scheduled to debut soon. This tool will allow users to track nutrition intake and log physical activity to provide real-time feedback that supports tailoring and monitoring individual health and wellness goals.

The H4H Challenge, a self-directed correspondence course with quizzes, feedback mechanisms, hyperlinks and bookmarks, allows Reserve soldiers and other military reservists to earn retirement points upon successful completion of a test.

For deploying service members and their families, a deployment globe in the environment module offers information about any region in the world where soldiers are sent. Family members can also access health benefit information throughout the site, including links to family readiness and support resources such as Tricare.

Another means of providing health promotion and fitness information is the quarterly H4H newsletter. The newsletter can be downloaded and tailored with a unit’s logo to support commanders in disseminating health and welfare information to their soldiers.

“As a commander, one must be prevention driven,” said Col. Karen Neumann, commander, 21st General Hospital, St. Louis, Mo. “The old cliché certainly applies: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

For more information visit the Hooah 4 Health Web site at www.hooah4health.com.